

How to Fight Terrorism

Use An All-Fronts Strategy

First and foremost, our strategy should be one of attacking on all fronts simultaneously. In the battle against terrorism, there is no magic bullet, no single weapon that will give us victory. We must employ, simultaneously and without letup, every technique at our disposal.

Know the Enemy

Second, we must never forget that, when fighting members of an alien culture, it is crucially important that we know the enemy. This means that every proposed (and existing) plan, every proposed (and existing) tactic, be presented to Middle East experts before it is put into effect. We should have a stable of experts that we can call on, at least 50% of whom were born and raised in the Middle East. The remainder can be natives of Western countries. (Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins is one of the best in the first category, Bernard Lewis of Princeton is one of the best in the latter category.) It is crucial that we know beforehand any unforeseen undesirable consequences of our proposed plans. What do the enemy leaders respect? In Iraq, some tribes consider it a symbol of triumph to drag the headless corpse of an enemy through the streets. Are such people likely to be moved by Western humanitarian gestures? (This is emphatically *not* an argument against such gestures; it is an argument for knowing beforehand what to expect if they are made.) Similarly, do the enemy leaders respect agreements? Does their culture? The two questions at all times are: what does the enemy *respect*? and, what causes *shame* in the enemy?

Don't Be Intimidated By the Fanaticism of Suicide Bombers

Many in the West think it is futile to attempt to fight an enemy with an unlimited supply of suicide bombers — an unlimited supply of *parents* who are all too eager to see their children die in this way. These Westerners point to the lack of education of most bombers as being precisely what the terrorist leadership needs in order to create fanatics. But these Westerners fail to realize that an uneducated, ignorant mind is equally subject to other kinds of indoctrination, e.g., that from films designed to appeal specifically to potential bombers (see below, “Make Full Use of Propaganda Films”), and broadcast via satellite to show that there are alternatives to blowing oneself up, alternatives that do not violate the Koran’s prohibition of Muslims killing Muslims, and that can lead to a life of at least less poverty while still guaranteeing entry into Paradise at the end.

We also shouldn’t overestimate the military prowess of the Iraqi insurgency. A really smart leadership would have ended most attacks on the coalition forces and simply laid low. What better incentive for the coalition forces to leave? (“We have won.”) Then, when these forces had all but gone, the insurgency could have used its full force in order to take over the weak government, Army and police force.

Remain in Constant Communication with the Israelis

Certainly the Israelis must be regarded as the best in the world at fighting terrorism. Therefore it is essential that we remain in constant communication with them, and include them among the experts referred to above with whom we discuss any future plans and tactics.

Threaten to Bomb Al Jazeera If Terrorists Use WMD

It may well be that the single most effective deterrent to terrorists contemplating the use of WMD would be the guarantee, made public beforehand, that if these weapons are used against us, we will bomb off the air Al Jazeera and all other Middle East television and radio stations, and keep them off the air permanently, using our superior technology, e.g., satellites, to locate the sources of future broadcasts. In short, the price of a WMD attack will be the permanent loss of Al Qaeda's public voice.

Reduce Financial Aid to Terrorist Countries For Each Attack

We should announce, publicly or behind-the-scenes, that from now on, aid to Middle East nations will be reduced significantly for each terrorist attack in Western countries. The reductions should, as much as possible, be aimed at reducing the amount that the leaders of the Middle East countries routinely skim off the top of all aid to their countries.

Don't Broadcast the Names of Recently Captured High-Ranking Terrorists

A level of stupidity that is almost beyond belief is exhibited by American authorities who (1) capture high-ranking terrorists who have in their possession a wealth of information about other terrorists throughout the country and the world, and then (2) call in the media to boast of the capture, thus giving all the terrorists in the captive's records ample time to disappear.

Don't Broadcast News of Our Defense Weaknesses and Strengths

A nation that is willing to do its enemy's research for it has no hope of winning a war. None. Whether by law or by an agreement among journalists, we must stop broadcasting details of the weaknesses, and strengths, in our national security.

Don't Broadcast the Names of Terrorist Organizations That Carry Out Bombings

Why should we provide terrorist organizations with free publicity? Why should we give them a further incentive for carrying out their attacks? News organizations around the world should make a voluntary pact only to report the attacks, and not to give the names of the organizations claiming credit.

Reduce Gas Consumption

A nation that is willing to contribute money to its enemy has no hope of winning a war. None. Every dollar we spend on gasoline and heating oil is money contributed to the terrorists, as Tom Friedman and others have repeatedly pointed out. Therefore government should promote, through tax incentives, more fuel-efficient cars, and citizens should begin loudly regarding with contempt all those — e.g., owners of gas-guzzling SUVs — who spend more on gas than they

absolutely need to.

Make Full Use of Propaganda Films

Nowhere is the colossal ineptitude of the Bush administration in fighting terrorism more evident than in its completely ignoring the power of the media to influence public opinion in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. *If your enemy is stupid and gullible, make the most of it!* The administration made an early attempt to broadcast to Iraq from an aircraft, but the incompetents in charge of the project hired, as announcer, a man with a provincial accent which, in Iraq, was regarded with amused contempt. In any case, the project was aborted. And yet it is hard to believe that a carefully programmed alternative to Al Jazeera (on both TV and radio), utilizing the full genius of the American advertising industry, employing every seductive means to lure viewers, would not have a major effect on the Iraqi population, a sufficiently large proportion of which does have access to TV and radio. (Otherwise bin Laden would not be so diligent in getting his tapes to Al Jazeera.)

One theme that would definitely be worth trying (if experts in Middle East culture agree) would be that of the ignominious treatment of the remains of suicide bombers by their own people. (See, e.g., “Bomber’s End: Flash of Terror, Humble Grave”, *The New York Times*, July 1, 2007, p. 1.) “In Kabul, the burial of a suicide bomber occurs at a secret time in a secret place, the forgettable end to what most here consider an unforgivable act.” It is hard to believe that a short film showing the recruitment of a young bomber, the glory he is told awaits him, then pictures of his headless, limbless torso before it is thrown into an unmarked grave, with no one to say any words in his memory before the dirt covers his remains — it is hard to believe that a steady presentation of such films would not have a significant effect on the recruitment of potential bombers.

Another theme that might be worth trying (if experts in Middle East culture agree) is that of mockery and humiliation of the terrorists: “Islamic terrorists once again demonstrated they are too stupid to do anything for their people except build bombs...”, etc. In a culture in which being admired for one’s deeds counts so much, such a message, repeated in various forms, day in, day out, might begin to have a significant effect.

Another theme should be that of the past glory of Islamic nations, namely, in the period 800 - 1100, when the Middle East Islamic countries were preserving the ancient Greek and Roman literature and when some cities were centers of learning and thought. The message here should be, “See how great you once were! This is proof that you have the intelligence and creativity needed to once again be world leaders. Why do you allow a group of fanatics to reduce you to this present life of poverty in which the only chance for distinction is to become a suicide bomber?”

And surely the nation whose films are still the most popular of all films throughout the world — surely such a nation can come up with dramas of poor persons in the Middle East turning their backs on terrorism, talking with contempt about the shame that terrorism brings on Islam, the dramas featuring everything to appeal to an ignorant, impressionable, angry Middle East audience.

Create Web Sites to Lure Potential Terrorists

There are two goals here: first, to find individuals who are potential terrorists and then, via sting operations, take them off the streets. Second, through skillfully-devised text on the web sites, to breed suspicion in such persons that web sites that are, in fact, sponsored by terrorist

organizations, have really been created by government security agencies. Of course, the authentic sites will then attempt to show why the fraudulent ones are fraudulent, and these, in turn, can make forceful arguments to show that such attempts are precisely what the creators of fraudulent sites would do, etc.

Encourage Warfare Between Tribes, Militias, Sunnis and Shiites

The principle is simple: Get your enemy to kill your enemy. Make full use of the media to broadcast facts about one faction that are likely to inflame the hatred of another. Make the most of the ignorance, stupidity, and obsession with violence of these groups.

Keep Bringing Into the Open the Real Reason for Terrorism

The real reason for terrorism is the fear that Palestinians, Arabs, Iranians and other Muslims have of not being able to make it in the modern world. (An understandable fear for a primitive people like the Palestinians, who every day wake up next door to one of most extraordinarily achieving nations in the world, namely, Israel.) And so, like American blacks, they fall back on the poisonous excuse, “If we are not succeeding, it is someone else’s fault.” More precisely, “We could be successful if we had more land — if we had the land back that was stolen from us.” Which is nonsense on three counts: first, the Palestinians weren’t successful before the state of Israel existed; second, Gaza alone is ample land to start universities and training schools, create small businesses, including high tech businesses and nurseries (as the Jews demonstrated), and, who knows, even a tourist industry given Gaza’s seacoast; and third: whether or not the land (Israel) was stolen from the Palestinians, they are not going to get it back, and it is time to recognize that fact and move on.

At the very least, the West must send the message again and again, “Stop the bullshit! You are afraid of competing with us on business terms. You want to impress us with your bravery and heroism? We don’t think suicide bombers are brave and heroic. We think they are stupid. Start proving yourselves the way the other successful countries in the world prove themselves.”

Keep Terrorist Prisoners in Model Prisons

The world was rightly outraged at U.S. treatment of prisoners in Abu-Graib and Guantanamo. And yet, since there is a high probability that many of these prisoners will be attacking us again if they are released, it is understandable that we should not want to release them. The solution to the problem is simple: do whatever is necessary to convert U.S. prisons containing terrorists and insurgents, into model prisons. Guarantee religious freedom, time and space for daily prayers, appropriate diets, comfortable cells, absence of torture. Invite routine visits by the Red Cross, Amnesty International, and other agencies. Broadcast, on our own Middle-East TV stations described above, frequent reports of the conditions and treatment in these prisons, thus helping to counteract terrorist propaganda about bad treatment. Make the prisons into a propaganda weapon for our side.

Close Off Immigration to People from Terrorist Countries

Although I have the highest respect for *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman, I cannot agree with his proposal to keep our doors open to people from all over the world because this will bring in the best minds from other countries. The question that I feel he must answer is, “Suppose only one or two out of a hundred students from the Middle East manage to set off a WMD in, say, New York City. Suppose several hundred thousand persons are killed. Will you still argue for open immigration?”

Our attitude should be: if they hate us so much, let them learn their chemistry and physics and engineering out of the Koran.

Deport Those Who Preach Terrorism

As a result of the attacks on the London subways and buses in July, 2005, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced a new crackdown on proponents of terrorism in Britain, including deportation of those who preach terrorism, and the shutting down of mosques where such preaching takes place. So it should be in our country, regardless of what the vanity of liberals says to the contrary.

Strongly Encourage Islamic Moderates to Help Fight Terrorism

Our message to Islamic moderates should be: it is not enough not to participate in terrorism. It is not enough to voice quiet disapproval after each terrorist attack. If you want us to make a clear distinction between your brand of Islam and that of the terrorists, you must publicly raise your voices against terrorism, you must start turning over terrorists to our authorities. We should use all legal means to encourage, motivate, pressure the moderates to do this.

Encourage Citizens to Volunteer in Protecting Borders, Reservoirs, Power Plants, Etc.

As reported in *The New York Times*¹ in May 2005, some citizens are already helping to patrol U.S. borders and coasts. This practice needs to be encouraged. It is certainly not new to our country, since at the start of the Cold War, during the early fifties, even high school students were volunteering to spot Russian bombers that might reach the U.S. mainland. We need to start patrolling our reservoirs, chemical plants, nuclear plants, and some of this can be done by trained civilians.

Promote Use of Transparent Backpacks in Cities

Finally, we should start making transparent backpacks a new fashion trend. It would be a trend that would make the job of police in cities, and especially subways, much easier.

1. “Retirees Answer the Call To Hunt for Terrorists”, *The New York Times*, May 4, 2005, p. A14

